

# TOWN OF VERNON

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**Daniel A. Champagne**  
*Mayor*

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## Mayor Champagne and Vernon Town Council Move to Create Cultural District in Downtown Rockville

### *Cultural District Advisory Board Will Bring Arts Events, Performances to Vernon*

**(VERNON, Connecticut)** – Mayor Dan Champagne and the Vernon Town Council have taken the first step toward creating a Cultural District in Vernon, specifically in Downtown Rockville, and have established a Cultural District Advisory Board to oversee the development of a district.

The initiative is consistent with Vernon’s recently adopted Plan of Conservation and Development and the Sustainable Connecticut initiative.

“Arts events and cultural attractions in Vernon benefit all of our residents, draw visitors to Vernon and help our dynamic business community” Mayor Champagne said. “We have taken steps to enhance the arts in Vernon, and this new effort will help us position historic Downtown Rockville as the economic, civic, social and cultural center of Tolland County.”

The Town Council approved a resolution Tuesday night establishing the Cultural District and the advisory board. As envisioned by the mayor and town officials, the district would run from Saxony Dog Park in the west to Gene Pitney Memorial Park in the east, Henry Park to the South and Talcott Park to the North.

Part of the Cultural District Advisory Board’s role will be to take an inventory of arts and cultural assets and further define the district’s boundaries.

“Focusing on arts and culture will naturally bring people together, break down barriers, and help us create a more cohesive and engaged community,” Town Administrator Michael Purcaro said.

“It’s clear from looking around Rockville that it was once the center of activity in the region,” said Shaun Gately, Vernon’s Economic Development Coordinator. “Look at the architecture, the mills, churches, the library and Town Hall. This is why Rockville is a prime location for this initiative. Rockville was built to be the center of arts and commerce in this region.”

The Rockville Public Library is one of those cultural assets and its staff has been working to bring the arts to Vernon through concerts and by hosting theatric performances. The library’s interior is adorned with the names of great writers and thinkers from history, and its collection contains their works.

“Creating a Cultural District is an opportunity to bring a spotlight to Vernon and Downtown Rockville and what we have to offer,” Library Director Jennifer Johnston-Marius said. “Bringing more arts and cultural activities to Rockville is just the start. It’s exciting to imagine what can happen through this effort.”

The Cultural District Advisory Board will consist of eight members who represent:

- Local cultural/arts council.
- Cultural organizations.
- For-profit creative businesses.
- Local businesses or the chamber of commerce.
- An artist who lives or works in the district.
- Other members can represent tourism, historic preservation, education, economic and community development and the leisure and hospitality industries.

The Cultural District Advisory Board will, among other things, help to:

- Create a cultural district.
- Create an inventory of arts and cultural assets.
- Develop a long-term plan for the visual and performing arts in the district.
- Encourage artists, entrepreneurs and creative businesses.
- Highlight the culture and history of Vernon.

“The arts are part of who we are as humans, and it’s how we express ourselves,” Gately said. “Whether it is music, drama, dance or cave drawings, human beings have expressed themselves since the beginning of time. We want to encourage people to come together, to create and to enrich our community. And we want Rockville to be a lively place with all kinds of fun activities and events.”

### **About the Town of Vernon**

The Town of Vernon is a celebrated place to live, work and visit. From its beautiful parks and lakes, to its vast trails and historic homes and buildings, Vernon is a resilient and thriving community that promotes the health and wellbeing of its residents and values the natural environment. With a resident population of approximately 30,000 and occupying 18.03 square miles, Vernon combines a balanced appreciation of history, and a strong economic base for growth, both residential and commercial. Located 15 minutes east of the Connecticut capital of Hartford, and 25 miles from the City of Springfield, Massachusetts, the Town of Vernon is strategically located in “New England's Knowledge Corridor” with close proximity to some of the top colleges and universities in the country.

Designated a certified Sustainable Community, the Town of Vernon offers a wide range of benefits and services to its residents. The Town of Vernon is a full-service municipality that practices a management philosophy of continuous quality improvement. To learn more about the Town of Vernon, please call (860) 870- 3670 or visit [www.vernon-ct.gov](http://www.vernon-ct.gov).

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